

Chris O'Brien

From: Jeb Barnes <jebbarnes826@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 9:21 AM
To: House Finance Committee
Subject: Oppose H6256 and Protect Rhode Island's Marine Economy

Dear Chairperson and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill H6256, which proposes eliminating the sales tax exemption on boats, vessel services, storage, and mooring in Rhode Island. This exemption, in place since 1990, has been a critical driver of our state's thriving marine economy, and repealing it would have serious negative consequences for our coastal communities, small businesses, and overall economic competitiveness.

Rhode Island has built a reputation as a marine industry hub by creating a tax environment that attracts boaters, business owners, and service providers. Eliminating this long-standing exemption would reverse decades of progress, driving boaters and maritime business to neighboring states like Connecticut and Massachusetts, where similar tax incentives exist. This bill would not only diminish boat sales but also undercut the many ancillary businesses that depend on the boating industry — from marinas and maintenance yards to local retailers, restaurants, and tourism operators.

The marine trades contribute over \$2 billion annually to the Rhode Island economy and support thousands of jobs. The proposed repeal of these exemptions threatens this economic engine at a time when we should be encouraging growth, not adding financial burdens to one of our most vital industries.

Rather than generating new revenue, this bill risks shrinking the tax base and sending both boats and business across state lines. I urge the committee to consider the long-term economic harm this change would bring and to vote **NO** on H6256 to protect Rhode Island's marine economy and the communities it sustains.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Frank Barnes

East Greenwich, RI